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ARE WE NEARLY THERE YET? EUDORUS ON ARISTOTLE'S *CATEGORIES*

GEORGE BOYS-STONES

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubting the important history of interaction that is there to be traced between the Platonic tradition (in its widest construal) and the Hellenistic schools; or, in particular, the importance that these schools had as conversation-partners with Platonists in the post-Hellenistic period. But in this chapter I want to make the case for a degree of circumspection in our approach to understanding how these encounters relate to the (undoubted) success that Platonism came to enjoy. It is often supposed that the very identity of Platonism was developed through the post-Hellenistic period as it learned one way or the other from its rivals; indeed, as I shall show, this assumption is effectively built into our historiography of the period. But I would like to suggest that, on the contrary, its identity is already surprisingly well defined in our earliest evidence, and that changes we might be able to discern as a result of its subsequent engagement with rival schools may as often be relatively superficial traces of a polemical move against them as a shift in theoretical commitment. (Similarly, there is no good reason to think that the other schools, including those with roots in the Hellenistic institutions, were any more open to profound philosophical change than they had been before.)

To illustrate this point, I am going to take as a case-study Eudorus' critical account of Aristotle's *Categories*. There are several reasons for choosing to look at this. First and foremost, it is the clearest possible example of a case in which a Platonist takes on board language from another school, but does so within an explicitly critical frame – making the point that what it is to be a Platonist ought to determine the sense to be given to material adopted from other schools, rather than being determined by it. Secondly, it is an early case of polemical engagement between Platonism and another school (and, if it is right to think that Eudorus is the first 'Platonist' of the post-Hellenistic age, then it is the very earliest there is) – which helps to make the point that the Platonism of the period under consideration in this volume has a robust adversative identity from the very beginning.¹ Finally, it is intended to question the status of the claim that Stoicism is 'the' philosophy at the nearside of the historical period covered by this volume ('From Stoicism . . .'),² or that Stoicism had a significance above that of other schools in the development of Platonist thought

during the post-Hellenistic period. The claim obviously fails if it is intended in blandly statistic terms;³ but neither does it seem accurate to say that Platonists were especially or essentially concerned about Stoicism above other schools (including Aristotelianism, Epicureanism, and the memory of the Sceptical Academy). What they were concerned about above all was the failure in all of these schools to see the aetiological importance of the forms; their success ('... to Platonism') was success in making the argument against them all.

PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSITION?

I have suggested that 'Platonism' has a fully-formed, adversative identity when we first catch sight of it in our evidence, with Eudorus in the first century BCE. But this is not how our histories have typically thought of it: for them, it gradually *emerges* through what they characterise as centuries of 'transition' leading from the end of the Hellenistic era to Plotinus in the mid-third century CE – a sense of transition which resonates through the title of this volume ('from ... to ...'). In one sense, of course, this is a perfectly benign way of describing the period. It is agreed that the philosophical landscape looks very different in 80 BCE and in 250 CE: let 'transition' name the sum of relevant changes that took place between these two dates. But such a description conceals a trap: phrased like this, it is easy to see that, if we can meaningfully apply the term 'transitional' to the post-Hellenistic era, we ought to be equally happy to apply it to any other philosophical period which is book-ended by intellectual climates different from one another. Indeed, given that this sort of book-ending is how periodisation in our histories are established, it will turn out that *any commonly recognised philosophical 'period' is a 'period of transition'*. Yet we do not typically talk, just for example, of the Classical period as one of transition (between Presocratic physics and the Hellenistic schools?).

The fact is that 'transitional' as a label does not, and cannot, function as a neutral description. In marking the chronological boundaries of a given period (from ... to ...), it privileges them over what happens in between, and makes them the standards by which to judge it. Post-Hellenistic philosophy offers us a good example of the negative effect that this historiographical framing can have. The 'transitional' character of post-Hellenistic philosophies has for a long time been cashed out in terms of 'eclecticism', the idea being that the various philosophers of the period developed their positions by selecting and recombining elements of earlier thought (in the first place, Plato and Aristotle, but also then the Hellenistic schools).⁴ And although this has not always been meant as a

criticism, it tends to a reductivism in any case: systems so described end up as *no more than* the sum of those parts to which the term ‘eclectic’ draws our attention; as if an ‘eclectic’ philosophy is understood when we understand the pre-existing options from which it was concocted. For this reason, it seems to me that the reaction against the *term* ‘eclecticism’ in more recent scholarship allows for no real advance in our understanding of the philosophies to which it was applied when it replaces it with terms such as ‘syncretism’ or ‘rapprochement’ or ‘absorption’ – which as far as this goes do exactly the same job.⁵ To the extent that they describe a process of change which is not rooted in philosophical purpose, they are all equally implicated in the overarching narrative of ‘transition’: they are all ways of describing the post-Hellenistic period as a bridge between our real points of interest.

In other words: if it is worth saying that post-Hellenistic philosophical systems are ‘transitional’, it is so because we think that they are *only* transitional, and have no intrinsic value to our histories.⁶ But how did we come to think this?

The characterisation of post-Hellenistic philosophy as ‘transitional’ is not, it ought to be emphasised, based on transparent historical data, nor on self-description, nor even on the perspective of later antiquity. (Even when, occasionally, later Platonists identify Plotinus as the beginning of a new age of Platonic exegesis, they do not characterise what went before as ‘transitional’.)⁷ The idea, rather, can be seen to have its roots in well-established *historiographical* prejudices of more recent times. Consider these remarks from Giovanni Reale’s history of ancient philosophy (1989: 329, emphasis mine):

Al medioplatonismo non mancarono uomini di ingegno, ma mancò il genio creatore o ricreatore, e, *appunto per questo*, esso restò filosofia di transizione, a metà del cammino che conduce da Platone a Plotino.⁸

Thomas Szlezák, again, make it clear what historians really hope to find, even as he makes the case that there are other reasons for which the period might attract our interest (2010: 392):

Doch ist nicht die Epoche als solche, nur weil kein ‘epochemachender’ Denker in ihr auftrat, deswegen schon selbst unwichtig.⁹

The Great Man Theory of history is not often so clearly articulated as here (but Reale and Szlezák have their own axe to grind as leading lights in the ‘Tübingen-Milan’ view of Plato which makes him the Greatest Man of all); but it has wide currency among Ancient Philosophers in an only slightly modified form: as a normative interest in the institutional school. I stress ‘*institutional* school’ because, as A. A. Long notes at the beginning of his chapter in this volume, the English word ‘school’ has a range of meanings, shading off at the far end in the innocently descriptive (‘school of thought’). But the schools on which historians rely most heavily are precisely those that offer frameworks within which we can identify – in principle, if not always in practice – a designated authority or spokesman for a given philosophy. (This is why ‘Great School Theory’ is really a survival of Great Man Theory: for what we are generally talking about when we talk about what such a ‘school’ thinks is what some authority licensed by the school-structure thinks.) The philosophies of the post-Hellenistic era are none of them ‘schools’ in this sense: even those with their roots in the Hellenistic institutions no longer had officially-designated spokesmen or the means to identify and appoint them. With no self-certifying genius (Reale’s ‘*genio (ri)creatore*’ or Szlezák’s ‘*epochemachender Denker*’), but no ‘official’ authorities either, our histories have nowhere to go: ‘any living philosophical movement, composed of independent minds unfettered by an official establishment of Guardians of the faith, is,’ we are told, ‘going to be “eclectic”.’¹⁰

Great School Theory, then, excludes periods without schools from our histories, just as Great Man Theory excludes periods without Great Men. But one might feel inclined, not to accept the conclusion, but to question the premise; to say that Great School Theory is *false* to those periods, and bad history – just as Great Man Theory is false to the centuries in between (say) Plato and Plotinus. In order to write histories that can encompass it all, we need to acknowledge that philosophy is sometimes done, heroically, by Great Men; is more often organised, institutionally, by schools; but may also be carried on, collectively, by communities working without hierarchal structures.

Understanding exactly how philosophical communities of this sort operate is a question for further research and reflection beyond the limits of this chapter.¹¹ The more restricted, but key, point on which I want to focus for its remainder is the demonstration of the fact that, one way or another, philosophical identity was robustly and constructively maintained in the post-Hellenistic period; that philosophical systems of the time can be, and ought to be, treated as the proper study of the history of philosophy, and not transitional phases to stops elsewhere. I am going to do this by arguing that there are cases which conventional history has viewed as evidence of dependence,

concession and ‘transition’ which are in fact exactly the opposite. At least sometimes we can see that the adoption of elements from a rival movement is part of a strategy to reinforce the difference between them.¹² Eudorus’ treatment of Aristotle’s *Categories* is, I want to argue, an especially clear example.

EUDORUS ON THE *CATEGORIES*

The *Categories* of Aristotle is unique in the post-Hellenistic age for having attracted sustained engagement, perhaps even lemmatic commentary, from philosophers who at the same time placed themselves at a distance from the tradition to which it belonged.¹³ Standard accounts of this interest are altogether at a loss to explain it. It is not even as if the *Categories* is an obvious site for debate about some particular issue, since one of the features of the interest it attracted is disagreement over what the work was about in the first place. Aristotelians and Stoics who discuss the work from the first century BCE onwards consider it to be concerned with issues of language (perhaps in the context of describing well-formed premises for logical arguments); Platonists, as we shall see, take it to be a work of ontology.¹⁴

So far as this goes, we might seem to be in the presence of, at best, a disagreement over Aristotle’s intentions – not in itself a philosophical question, or one that Aristotelian commentators of the time need to feel as a threat. (Nor is it obvious why Platonists should even have cared what the *Categories* was about.) But what gives us some hope that there is a philosophical issue at the root of it all is a further claim made, or implied, by the early Platonist commentators on the *Categories*. They *appropriate* it as a work of ontology, but they do this to *criticise* it as a rather second-rate work of ontology – at the very least, as one in need of some emendation. The fact that Platonists pick fights in this way suggests that there is something of philosophical value at stake. This is not only a disagreement about Aristotle’s intentions, a ‘simple’ act of appropriation.

Consider the following report of a criticism moved already by Eudorus (fr. 17 M = Simplicius, *On the Categories* 206.10-15 Kalbfleisch):

καὶ Εὐδωρος δὲ τῷ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ τὸν περὶ τῆς ποιότητος λόγον καὶ μετὰ τοῦτον τὸν περὶ τοῦ ποσοῦ συνεξεῦχθαί φησιν· τὴν γὰρ οὐσίαν ἅμα τῷ ποιῶ καὶ ποσῶ συνυφίστασθαι, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τὴν χρονικὴν τε καὶ τοπικὴν κατηγορίαν παραλαμβάνεσθαι· πᾶσαν γὰρ οὐσίαν ποῦ τε εἶναι καὶ ποτέ, δηλονότι τὴν αἰσθητήν.

Eudorus too¹⁵ says that the account of quality and, after this, quantity is joined onto the account of substance: for a substance is constituted along with its quality and quantity. After this are taken the categories of time and place: for every substance – he means perceptible substance, of course – is in some place and time.

Eudorus' disagreement with the normal Aristotelian (and, incidentally, the Stoic) view that the *Categories* is a work concerned with language is evident here: he takes the 'categories' to be terms of ontological analysis. What is more, he linked the categories, at least those mentioned in this text, to a certain kind of substance, namely perceptible substance.¹⁶ As far as that goes, he presumably thinks that the Aristotelians have simply misunderstood the intentions of Aristotle.

But there is also criticism of Aristotle himself in this passage. Most strikingly, it asserts that the categories should be taken in an order different from that in which Aristotle set them out. Aristotle lists them at *Categories* 1b25-7 as: substance, quantity, quality, relation, where, when, disposition, possession, action and affection. Eudorus thinks that the first five, at least, ought to be: substance, quality, quantity, time and place. In other words, quantity and quality are transposed, as are where ('place') and when ('time');¹⁷ and the latter two are promoted above the category of the 'relative', which is not mentioned here at all.¹⁸

But does any of this matter? How deep does the criticism go? We are talking about a *list* after all – and it is not as if Aristotle himself claimed that the order made any difference. Recent commentators on Eudorus have tended to assume, therefore, that it does not in fact matter very much. Eudorus at best is engaged in some tidying-up here: shuffling things into an order that answers to our normal analytical practices, but has no philosophical import of its own.¹⁹

This tendency to trivialise Eudorus' arguments evidently plays to the assumption that Eudorus (like others of his time) is a 'transitional' thinker: the less these criticisms have substance, the more it will seem obvious that 'absorption' or 'syncretism' is the point. Yet this seems to me precisely the *reductio ad absurdum* of the 'transitional' model: for (to read it the other way round) the more such an approach succeeds in demonstrating 'syncretism', the less it allows there to be any philosophical purpose behind it at all.²⁰ At the limit of this argument, the 'absorption' or 'syncretism' comes to exist entirely as an end in itself. The philosophy it describes is no longer 'in transition': it is *nothing but transition*.

What is more, there is some *prima facie* reason to suppose that there is more going on here than such an account can encompass. For as soon as we know that Eudorus is reading the

Categories as an ontological work (remembering that this must be a self-consciously adopted position, since the Aristotelians themselves disagreed with it), it ought to strike us as significant that he has removed the category of the ‘relative’ from the new group of five he has created. The reason that this ought to strike us as significant is that the term ‘relative’ (πρός τι) also names one of the two categories in Platonist thought. Plato was, since the days of the Old Academy, commonly understood to have operated with a two-category distinction between what exists *in itself* (the ‘*per se*’ / καθ’ αὐτό) and what exists *relative* to other things (πρός τι).²¹ With this in mind, it could start to look very much as if Eudorus’ list is the beginning of a way of *reforming* Aristotle’s categories so that they *conform* to this older Platonic distinction. The first five categories in Eudorus’ list – exactly half of the total, with the ‘relative’ pointedly excluded – might *together* be intended in some way to fall under the Platonic *per se*.

This might seem problematic insofar as it is natural to assume that the Platonic *per se* applies, or applies pre-eminently, to the realm of forms, and we have been told that Eudorus is treating here of sensible substance. Indeed, our other main testimony to Eudorus’ work on the *Categories* as a whole (fr. 15 M = Simplicius, *On the Categories* 174.14-16 Kalbfleisch) makes precisely the point that Aristotle does not treat of the *per se*, and might even be taken to imply that *all* of his categories identify entities which from a strict Platonic point of view are ‘relative’:²²

Αἰτιᾶται δὲ ὁ Εὐδωρος, διὰ τί ἀντιδιηρημένου τοῦ καθ’ αὐτὸ τῷ πρὸς τι περὶ μὲν τοῦ πρὸς τι διείλεκται ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, περὶ δὲ τοῦ καθ’ αὐτὸ οὐκέτι.

Eudorus raises a problem: why, when there is a division between the *per se* and the relative, did Aristotle discuss the relative, but said nothing else about the *per se*?

But the claim in 17 M does not have to be that the first five categories are themselves examples of the *per se*, only that the *per se* has some special relationship with them. For example, all of Eudorus’ first five categories can be taken to identify things for which a Platonist would identify *per se* causes: (perceptible) substance and those determinations (quality, quantity, place and time) which serve to, as it were, concretise it. The remaining five categories, those omitted in the report of Eudorus in 17 M, by contrast all deal with relationships into which one perceptible substance can enter with another, and for which there are no *per se* causes:²³ disposition (is of something *on* or *around* something else),²⁴ possession (is *of* something else), action (is *on* something else), affection (is *by* something else).

So much, then, would explain Eudorus' promotion of *these five categories* in 17 M. But it could also explain the transpositions. For these five categories, in Eudorus' order, track the hierarchy of Platonic causes as well. A substance (i.e. a sensible substance) would answer to some form-paradigm, but its qualities too might be explained by reference to forms; its quantity might be referred to specifically *mathematical* forms (which lie below other forms, at least in the Line image of *Resp.* 6);²⁵ and these in turn give concrete definition to time (the image in the natural world of the eternity that all these things share: *Timaeus* 37d), and place (listed below it perhaps for its closer implication with the receptacle; cf. *Timaeus* 52a-b).

Aristotle <i>Cat.</i> 1b25-7	Eudorus fr. 17 M	Tentative reconstruction of Eudorus' scheme:
		I. <i>per se</i> being, sc. intelligible substance (15 M)
		II. <i>relative</i> being (15 M):
		(a) things with <i>per se</i> causes (17 M):
substance	substance	sensible substance
quantity	quality	quality
quality	quantity	quantity
relation	time	time
where	place	place
when		
		(b) relationships between sensible substances (-):
	...	relation
disposition	...	disposition
possession	...	possession
action	...	action
affection	...	affection

Fig. 1: Eudorus' 'correction' of Aristotle

If the Platonists' critical engagement with the *Categories* were as superficial and aimless as the recent literature on it suggests,²⁶ one can only imagine the baffled amusement it must have provoked among Aristotelians: the Platonists would have been quibbling with the work for trivial errors in doing what *they* knew it was not intended to do at all. On my reconstruction of Eudorus,

however, he has a clear philosophical purpose in mind. He establishes that the *Categories* is a flawed attempt at ontology by showing that one can see it to be what is in effect a degenerate ‘Platonist’ treatise on the subject (one that, for example, ignores intelligible reality, mislabels some of the categories and shuffles them into an arbitrary order). But once one sees that, the challenge to Aristotelians contemporary with Eudorus becomes clear as well. The challenge lies in accounting for their stance, not as a principled philosophical choice, but as the final consequence of a witless drift away from the proper understanding of Plato, a drift which began with Aristotle. The idea that the *Categories* is not a work about language but a careless ontological one has no claim on our philosophical interest in its own right; it is philosophically compelling only and precisely as a critical explanation of how post-Hellenistic Aristotelians came to lose sight of intelligible substance altogether (to the extent indeed that they came to read the *Categories* itself as nothing more than a study in words).²⁷ As an act of polemical appropriation, Eudorus’ engagement with the *Categories* does not blur the division between Platonist and Aristotelian, but presupposes and affirms it. For this to be possible, there must be a strong and prior sense of purpose and philosophical identity in Eudorus – a ‘formal’ identity which is not built up from its ‘material’ appropriations and influences but which, on the contrary, controls them.

CONCLUSION

I wanted to argue for circumspection in our assessment of the interactions between post-Hellenistic schools; in particular, that we should avoid the temptation to use the evidence of these interactions as a ‘bottom-up’ means of constructing our understanding of them. The point applies, indeed, to any ancient school; but the temptation to do so is especially strong in the post-Hellenistic age because the narrative of ‘transition’ encouraged by Great School Theory has not left us adequate room for a robust, higher-level description of its philosophical movements. At the (heavily populated) extreme, our histories have implied the attrition of Hellenistic school identity on the one hand (‘from Stoicism’?), and the accumulation of material into new systems on the other (‘to Platonism’?). The example I have considered of Eudorus on the *Categories* shows that, on the contrary, philosophical interactions continue to be determined by the (top-level) identity of the schools involved, however in fact that was maintained; and that this ought to operate as the frame for the assessments we make – *whether or not we conclude that the result of a particular interaction is a substantial change of position.*

To put this another way: post-Hellenistic philosophy can only properly enter our histories when we see that the systems of the age and their engagements are no different in principle from those of any other period. That requires (but also: allows) us to understand what they *are* before thinking about what they *do*. From that perspective, the question of how Platonism came to dominate philosophy by the third century CE is really not such a difficult question. It comes down to the success of their position on transcendent causes – a position they shared with the other philosophical movements that thrived alongside them, including Pythagoreanism and (especially) Christianity, and which they effectively argued against not only the Stoics but Epicureans and Aristotelians as well.

NOTES

¹ For Eudorus as the first ‘Platonist’, see e.g. Dörrie 1944; Reale 1989: 313; Bonazzi 2002. It seems to me bold to infer from the silence of our evidence that he does not have relevant forebears; but it is true that we do not know of any earlier figure who was recognised as ‘one of their own’ by later self-describing Platonists (as by Plutarch: cf. below with n. 23). (This is a criterion which Antiochus of Ascalon certainly does not meet, by the way: he is mentioned by Platonists only to distance him from them: see e.g. Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 4.1-2; Numenius fr. 28 des Places.)

² Engberg-Pedersen 2010b: 1 (‘leading’), 4 (‘the reigning type of philosophy’), etc.

³ Epicureanism, for example, remained at least as popular as Stoicism, and for as long: see Castner 1988 (and cf. O’Meara 1999 for Neoplatonist awareness of Epicureanism); for broader statistical data on the affiliation of philosophers through the post-Hellenistic period, Goulet 2013. Plutarch wrote more works specifically against Epicureans (nine: *Lamprias* 80, 81, 82, 129, 133, 143, 155, 159, 178) than specifically against the Stoics (seven: *Lamprias* 59, 77, 78, 79, 149, 152, 154). (*Lamprias* 148 deals with Stoics *and* Epicureans.) And although we know of no specifically anti-Epicurean work by any other Platonist of the time, we can only be sure of *one* other specifically anti-Stoic work: Taurus wrote a work on the self-contradictions of the Stoics (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 12.5.5 = 17T Gioè). (His *On Bodies and Incorporeals*, T3 Gioè, might also have had the Stoics in view, as most assume of ps.-Galen, *That Qualities are Incorporeal* – although Todd 1977 has argued that this latter work is in fact aimed at Epicureans.) Cf. also Hierax, *On Justice*, which attacked Stoic and Peripatetic views. There is a wider spread of evidence for works against Aristotle (aimed, presumably, at contemporary Aristotelians): in addition to the works on (or anyway containing criticism of) the *Categories* by Eudorus, Lucius and Nicostratus, there is Atticus’ work ‘against those who undertake to reconstruct Plato’s doctrines through Aristotle’, Eubulus’ *Aristotle’s Objections to the Republic of Plato* and Taurus’ *On the Difference of Doctrines between Plato and Aristotle*. (Plutarch wrote on *Aristotle’s Topics*, *Lamprias* 56, and a *Discussion on the Ten Categories*, *Lamprias* 192; but both works are lost and we cannot be sure what his intention with them was.) It was presumably not nostalgia that motivated Marcus Aurelius to endow Chairs in Epicureanism and Aristotelianism in 176, alongside Chairs in Stoicism and Platonism, but a reflection of the strength of all four movements even as late as that.

⁴ See the illuminating account in Catana 2013.

⁵ ‘Syncretism’: e.g. Merlan 1967: 64; Blumenthal 1972: 340; Lilla 1997: 147; Sedley 2003a: 22; ‘rapprochement’: Sterling 1993; Sedley 2005; ‘absorption’: Engberg-Pedersen 2010b: 4; Gritti

2011: 212. Cf. terms like ‘generous’ / ‘inclusive’ / ‘fusion’ in Gill 2010: 30-1. (‘Eclecticism’ is still to be found: e.g. Dillon 1988; Gill 2010: 41-2.)

⁶ ‘Transition’, then, is sometimes linked to the idea of philosophical *exile* and *homelessness* (e.g. Engberg-Pedersen 2010b: 2; I prefer ‘diaspora’, as e.g. Sedley 1997a: 112). The discredited hypothesis of the ‘School of Gaius’ can be viewed in this light as a game attempt to write ‘Middle’ Platonism into our histories by *finding* it institutional structures.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Proclus, *Platonic Theology* 1.6.16-21 with Opsomer 2007: 285.

⁸ ‘Middle Platonism did not lack men of intelligence, but it did lack any creative, or re-creative, genius – and *for that very reason* it remained a philosophy of transition, midway on the journey that led from Plato to Plotinus.’ (‘Re-creative’ allows for someone like Plotinus who in Reale’s view is brilliant but not, with respect to Plato, original.) Nicholas Denyer pointed out to me in conversation that ‘midway on the journey’ might be a conscious or unconscious allusion to Dante.

⁹ ‘The period is uninteresting not in its own right, but only because no epoch-defining thinkers appeared during it.’

¹⁰ Dillon 1988: 125. Cf. Löhr 2010, arguing that Christianity failed as a philosophy (‘It remained an unfinished project, a never completed fulfilled ambition’: 187) – *because* it failed to establish schools on the Greek model. (The Antonine Chairs of Philosophy – cf. n. 3 above – made no difference to this picture: their holders had more social prestige than philosophical authority.)

¹¹ A constructive starting-point might be the notion of the ‘textual community’ recently explored in this context by Baltzly 2014.

¹² Whether it was *ever* anything else seems to me an open question, and one which can only be answered within the framework of the more responsive historiographical model for which this chapter is in part an argument.

¹³ By ‘it’ here I mean the text itself, not the ideas it contains. Part of the Platonist claim will be that the *ideas* within the text were already implicit in Plato (see esp. Plutarch and the anonymous commentator as cited in n. 15 below; also Alcinous, *Did.* 6.10, 159.43-4). There is no clear evidence for the existence of dedicated Platonist commentaries, but it has been assumed that this was the context for the critical work of Eudorus, Lucius and Nicostratus; and cf. Plutarch’s lost *Discussion on the Ten Categories* (n. 3 above).

¹⁴ I discuss Eudorus frs. 15 and 17 M[azzarelli 1985] further below; see also 18-22 M (which concern matters relating to the internal consistency of the *Categories*). Among other Platonists, more or less explicitly critical observations are preserved from: Lucius and Nicostratus (fragments

in Gioè 2002); Plutarch (*De proc. an.* 1023D-E with n. 23 below; cf. his lost *Discussion on the Ten Categories* = *Lamprias* 192); and the anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus* (P.Berol. 9782, coll. 67.34-68.15). Cf. also Atticus fr. 2.136-8 des Places. Cognate material from the same period is to be found in Philo (*De dec.* 30-1), Nicomachus (*Intr. Arith.* 1.1.3-4), and ps.-Archytas (*On Universals* or *Categories*: 22.5 ff. Thesleff; also cited as *On Universal Terms*). In general see Moraux 1984; and especially Griffin 2015.

¹⁵ I.e. in common with (ps.-)Archytas: see n. 19 below.

¹⁶ Griffin (2015: 88) expresses doubt about the provenance of the qualifying phrase *δηλονότι τὴν αἰσθητὴν*: ‘it is not obvious that the gloss is Eudorus’, or that Eudorus insisted that the *Categories* addressed only sensible οὐσία. He may, for example, have allowed for an *intelligible* time and place in which intelligible substance might subsist, as Iamblichus would later propose.’ But (allowing that the phrase itself may well not be due to Eudorus) it is even less obvious why Simplicius would have added the restriction unless it accurately represented what Eudorus was thinking: if he were misrepresenting him (given that Simplicius has no motive to win our sympathies for Eudorus), this is not an obviously damaging way to do it. (Griffin in general may be too keen to complicate our evidence for Eudorus in order to square it with what we are told about Pythagorean interest in the question: see also n. 19 below.)

¹⁷ There is of course a further ‘emendation’: in common with ps.-Archytas, Eudorus substitutes ‘time’ and ‘place’ for Aristotle’s ‘when’ and ‘where’. The philosophical motivation for this is not obvious, although it might be intended to reinforce the ontological rather than the linguistic account of the categories – considering them as designed to identify the concrete effects of certain causes, rather than the sort of answer appropriate to particular questions.

¹⁸ Commentators, beginning with Simplicius himself, note that ps.-Archytas also adopts a non-Aristotelian order of the *Categories* which has in common with Eudorus (1) that it begins substance-quality-quantity; (2) that it adopts the names ‘time’ and ‘place’ for Aristotle’s ‘when’ and ‘where’; and (3) that it reverses the order of this latter pair (to read: place-time). But it might be dangerous to build too much on the back of these similarities (as e.g. by Theiler 1965: 205, with an inference about relative date; Tarrant 2008: 592; Griffin 2015). The significance of the first is weakened by the fact that Aristotle himself quite often uses the order substance-quality-quantity (e.g. *An. post.* 83a22; *Metaph.* I, 1068a8-9; Λ, 1069b9-10; *EN* 1, 1096a24-6; *EE* 1, 1217b27-8); and there is at least one divergence between Eudorus and ps.-Archytas which is as significant as the

remaining coincidences: the fact that Eudorus places time and place immediately after quantity. (Cf. on this Dillon 1977: 135.)

¹⁹ It is testimony to the grip of the conventional view of Platonic ‘eclecticism’ that commentators are able to *deny* that it is polemical – as e.g. Griffin 2015: 83, citing with approval Chiaradonna 2013: 47-50 – even while listing the ways that it ‘criticizes’ (Griffin 2015: 84), ‘corrects’ (cf. 86) and ‘critiques’ (cf. 90) the ‘incomplete account’ (89; cf. ‘inadequate’ at 94) left by an Aristotle who was ‘sometimes errant’ (97). Cf. also Tarrant 2008: 592 (arguing in relation to fr. 15 M that ‘Eudorus is somebody with a liking for neat and orderly divisions’); Bonazzi 2013b: 180-1. A rare voice in contrast is Dörrie 1944: 300.

²⁰ This is especially striking in Griffin, for example, who develops a clear account of the dialectical use to which a Peripatetic of the time (Andronicus) could put the categories (2015: ch. 2), but has Eudorus do no more than to ‘map’ them onto a pre-existing ontology (e.g. 75).

²¹ For Xenocrates, see fr. 12 Heinze; explicit attribution to Plato by Hermodorus ap. Simplicius, *On the Physics* 248.2 Diels, and by Aristotle himself according to DL 3.108-9. The status of the ‘relative’ identified in these testimonia is contested: a relative might be, as variously in Aristotle himself, a property which is relative to the substance whose property it is, or a property which is relative to some other property (e.g. good vs. bad, or large vs. small in Simplicius’ report of Hermodorus). I am assuming for Eudorus that ‘relative’ names a property which one (sensible) substance might have *in virtue of its relationship with* another (sensible substance). (Compare his remarks on what makes an action ‘appropriate’, reported at Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.6 [44.20-2 W.] = Eudorus fr. 1 M (part): ἃ μὲν ἐστὶ καθ’ ἑαυτά, ἃ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πλησίον σχέσιν.)

²² Griffin (2015: 90) suggests that the continuation of this passage, which proposes a ‘metaphysical’ reading of the non-substance categories, may itself be from Eudorus. But the formula with which it is introduced (καὶ ὅγτέον ὅτι . . .) is a standard way for the commentator to introduce his own response to a problem just raised. In other words, the ‘metaphysical’ reading is part of Simplicius’ reply to Eudorus, rather than part of the report of Eudorus’ own views. For parallels in ‘Middle’ Platonism to the idea that everything in the sensible world falls under the ‘relative’, see especially the anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus* at col. 68.1-7. Cf. too Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1115E; and especially *De proc. an.* 1023D-E. The latter passage is often taken to suggest that Plutarch applied the categories to the intelligible world (e.g. Griffin 2015: 91-3), but in fact Plutarch 1023E can easily be made to fit what I am suggesting for Eudorus in 15 M (allowing, as Griffin and others before him have noted, that Plutarch may have been consciously following Eudorus, who is an

explicit point of reference for at least some parts of the *Generation of the Soul*). The context is that Plutarch is trying to explain how the soul manages both intellection and opinion: the answer is that the soul can say (a) whether something is the same (i.e. is *per se*; a form), or (b) whether it is *other* (sc. ‘relative’?) and then (b1) it can say in relation to what it is other, and (b2) where and (b3) how . . . all of which, as Plutarch now notes in passing, gives us an ‘outline’ (ὕπογραφή) of the ten categories. (NB When Plutarch says that Plato will be clearer on the point ‘in what follows’, the point he has in mind is the soul’s dual cognitive faculties and *not*, as often supposed, the ten categories which, as I say, are mentioned *in passing* alongside the main point – ἄμα καὶ τῶν δέκα κατηγοριῶν ποιούμενος – and about which Plutarch says nothing else at all.)

²³ That is, given the sense of ‘relative’ I am ascribing to Eudorus (n. 22 above), and given the widespread assumption among post-Hellenistic Platonists that there are no forms of relatives (e.g. Alc., *Did.* 9.2, 163.29-30).

²⁴ In my construal, Eudorus would here have to be making a further, radical ‘correction’ of Aristotle’s account of what makes ‘disposition’ (*diathesis*) a relative. Aristotle gives the examples of ‘lying’ and ‘sitting’, and says that these very things (lying, sitting) are relative to that which lies or sits (*Cat.* 6b6 and 12-14 with 11b10-11). In my reconstruction of Eudorus, ‘lying’ and ‘sitting’ identify a relation between the thing lying / sitting and that on which it lies / sits. But we know that Eudorus did as a matter of fact devote special consideration to the analysis of *diathesis*: frs. 18, 19 and 20 M all concern it (and cf. 22 M, which deals with *thesis*). What is more, we know that he construed the very similar term *schesis* in just the way I am suggesting (see again fr. 1 M, as quoted in n. 22 above). Finally, there is an obvious philosophical advantage to the move I am ascribing to him: it heads off a notorious problem that modern commentators too have seen with Aristotle’s treatment, namely that it creates a slippery slope towards saying that *everything* that belongs to some substance – which is to say everything falling under nine of the ten categories – is a ‘relative’ (cf. e.g. Ackrill 1963: 99).

²⁵ Alternatively: the form-paradigm explains the palette of perceptible qualities that, along with quantities, constitute sensible substances (cf. συνυφίστασθαι). (This would better fit my own – admittedly controversial – view that Platonists before Porphyry did not believe in ‘immanent’ forms, but discussed sensible substance in terms of what Plotinus calls ‘completive’ qualities, συμπληρωτικά.)

²⁶ Cf. the observation in Chiaradonna 2009: 108 that, despite the effort of bringing the Aristotelian categories into their systems, Platonists in fact made little use of them. I take issue, then, with David Sedley's suggestion that Eudorus used the Aristotelian scheme 'alongside' the Academic, and might just as well have jettisoned the latter (2002a: 349-50; cf. Bonazzi 2013b: 180-1). Chiaradonna 2009: 107 talks of 'intégration subordonnée' (although he has a something purely formal in mind).

²⁷ The materialist schools tended to claim that 'forms' were hypostasises of linguistic items; Platonists objected in their turn to the materialists' reduction of ontology to language. For another example of the latter move, compare Syrianus' criticisms of Chrysippus, Archedemus 'and most Stoics' for reducing the forms to linguistic conventions (*in Metaph.* 105.19-23 Kroll); I see a case of the former in Seneca, *Letter* 65 (Boys-Stones 2013).